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IN THE CLAIMS

1-10 (Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) A method of communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first and second computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the method comprising operations of:

the IM application programs cooperatively replicating contents and format of a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first computer in a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer; computer.

where the operation of replicating the contents is completed only in

response to performance of each of the following actions:

the first computer receiving a predetermined user input sequence

including invocation of a predetermined clipboard paste

command of the operating system running at the first

computer, where the predetermined user input sequence is

performed in conjunction with the IM window at the first

computer;

the IM application program running on the second computer

presenting a user prompt in conjunction with the IM window

of the second computer, the user prompt including

notification that clipboard contents and format from the first

computer are available to the second computer;

the IM application program running on the second computer

detecting user selection of the user prompt.

12. (Currently Amended) A method of communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first

and second computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the method comprising operations of:

the IM application programs cooperatively replicating contents and format of a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first computer in a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer;

~~The method of claim 11~~, where the replicating operations comprise:

responsive to the first computer receiving a predetermined user input sequence including invocation of a predetermined paste command of the operating system running at the first computer, where the predetermined user input sequence is performed in conjunction with the IM window at the first computer, the IM application program running on the first computer performing operations including uploading contents and format of the clipboard of the operating system running at the first computer;

responsive to the IM application program running on the first computer receiving user entry of a send command, the IM application program running on the first computer transferring said uploaded contents and format to the second computer;

responsive to receiving the transferred contents and format, the IM application program running on the second computer presenting a user prompt in conjunction with the IM window of the second computer;

the IM application program running on the second computer, responsive to user selection of the user prompt, copying the transferred contents and format to the clipboard of the operating system running at the second computer.

13. (Currently Amended) A method of communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first and second computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the method comprising operations of:

the IM application programs cooperatively replicating contents and format of a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first computer in a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer;

~~The method of claim 11,~~ where the replicating operations comprise:

responsive to the first computer receiving a predetermined user input sequence including invocation of a predetermined paste command of the operating system running at the first computer, where the user input sequence is performed in conjunction with the IM window at the first computer, the IM program running on the first computer presenting an acknowledgement message in conjunction with the IM window of the first computer;

responsive to the IM application program running on the first computer receiving user entry of a send command, performing operations comprising:

the IM application program running on the first computer uploading contents and format of the clipboard of the operating system running at the first computer, and transferring said uploaded contents and format to the second computer;

the IM application program running on the second computer presenting a user prompt in conjunction with the IM window of the second computer;

the IM application program running on the second computer, responsive to receiving user selection of the user prompt,

copying the transferred contents and format to the clipboard of operating system running at the second computer.

14. (Currently Amended) A method of communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first and second computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the method comprising operations of:

the IM application programs cooperatively replicating contents and format of a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first computer in a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer;

~~The method of claim 11~~, where the transmitting and replicating operations comprise:

responsive to the IM application program running on the first computer receiving user entry of a send command, performing operations comprising:

the IM application program running on the first computer sending notice of the paste to the IM application program running on the second computer;

the IM application program running on the second computer presenting a user prompt in conjunction with the IM window of the second computer;

responsive to receiving user selection of the user prompt, performing operations comprising:

the IM application program running on the first computer uploading contents and format of the clipboard of the operating system running at the first computer, and transferring said uploaded contents and format to the second computer;

the IM application program running on the second computer copying the transferred contents and format to the clipboard of the operating system running at the second computer.

15. (Currently Amended) A method of communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first and second computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the method comprising operations of:

the IM application programs cooperatively replicating contents and format of a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first computer in a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer;

~~The method of claim 11~~, where the replicating operation comprises responsive to the first computer receiving a predetermined user input sequence including invocation of a predetermined paste command of the operating system running at the first computer, where the predetermined user input sequence is performed in conjunction with the IM window at the first computer, the IM application program running on the first computer performing at least one of:

- uploading contents and format of the clipboard of the operating system running at the first computer;
- uploading contents and format of the clipboard of the operating system running at the first computer and transferring the uploaded contents and format to the second computer;
- sending notice of the paste to the IM application program running on the second computer.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11, where:

~~the operations further comprise, before completion of said replicating operation, the IM program at the second computer presenting a user prompt in conjunction with the IM window of the second computer;~~

completion of the replicating operation is conditioned on the IM application program running on the second computer receiving user selection of the user prompt.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11, ~~claim 16~~, the user prompt comprising a hyperlink.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16,
the clipboard of the operating system running at the first computer having
been populated by a document fragment from a given source
application program;
the user prompt further including identification of the given source
application program.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16,
the clipboard of the operating system running at the first computer having
been populated by differently formatted versions of a document
fragment from a source application program;
the replicating operation placing the differently formatted versions of the
document fragment into the clipboard of the operating system of the
second computer, reserving choice as between the versions to any
application programs running on the second computer receiving a
predetermined user input sequence including invocation of a
predetermined paste command of the operating system running at
the second computer.

20. (Previously Presented) A process of communications between first and second computers having an open text messaging link, the computers running respective text messaging application programs providing a text messaging window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the process comprising operations of:

- replicating contents and format of a first computer's operating system clipboard in an operating system clipboard of a second computer, where the replicating operation is conducted responsive to coordinated user instructions submitted via respective text messaging application programs of the first and second computers.

21. (Currently Amended) Computer-readable storage media containing a first program for installing a second program, the second program when installed on multiple target computers performing operations for communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first and second computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the operations comprising:

- the IM application programs cooperatively replicating contents and format of a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first computer in a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer.

22. (Currently Amended) Computer-readable storage media containing a first program for installing a second program, the second program when installed on multiple target computers performing operations for communications between first and second computers having an open IM link, the computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the operations comprising:

- replicating contents and format of a first computer's operating system clipboard in an operating system clipboard of a second computer,

where the replicating operation is conducted responsive to coordinated user instructions submitted at each of the computers via interfaces provided by windows of respective IM application programs.

23. (New) The method of claim 11, further comprising:
responsive to the first computer receiving the predetermined user input sequence, the first computer displaying a system message in lieu of displaying contents of the clipboard in the IM window of the first computer.

24. (New) The method of claim 11, where the operation of the IM application program running on the second computer presenting a user prompt in conjunction with the IM window of the second computer is performed in lieu of any display in the IM window of the second computer of the clipboard provided by the operating system running at the first computer.

25. (New) A method of communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first and second computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the method comprising operations of:

responsive to occurrence of at least a minimal set of actions in conjunction with the IM windows, the IM application programs automatically negotiating reproduction of contents and format of a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first computer in a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer;

where the minimal set of actions includes:

the IM application program running on the first computer detecting invocation of a predetermined clipboard paste command of

the operating system running at the first computer in
conjunction with the IM window at the first computer;
the IM application program running on the second computer
presenting a user prompt in conjunction with the IM window
of the second computer, the user prompt including
notification that clipboard contents and format from the first
computer are available to the second computer;
the IM application program running on the second computer
detecting user selection of the user prompt.

26. (New) A method of communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first and second computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the method comprising operations of:

responsive to receiving user instructions entered in conjunction with at least one of the IM windows, the IM application program at the first computer importing contents and format of a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first computer;

responsive to receiving user instructions entered in conjunction with at least one of the IM windows, the IM application program at the first computer transmitting the uploaded contents and format to the IM application program at the second computer;

responsive to receiving user instructions entered in conjunction with the IM window of the first computer, the IM application program at the second computer presenting a user prompt indicating that clipboard contents and format from the first computer are available to the second computer;

responsive to the second computer detecting predetermined user selection in conjunction with the user prompt, importing the

transmitted contents and format into a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer.

27. (New) A method of communications between first and second computers having an open instant messaging (IM) connection, the first and second computers running respective IM application programs providing an IM window at each computer for displaying an exchange of text messages, the method comprising operations of:

- responsive to the first computer receiving a predetermined user input sequence including invocation of a predetermined clipboard paste command of the operating system running at the first computer, where the predetermined user input sequence is performed in conjunction with the IM window at the first computer, responsive to the first computer receiving the predetermined user input sequence, the first computer displaying a system message in lieu of displaying contents of the clipboard in the IM window of the first computer;
- responsive to user entry in conjunction with at least one of the IM windows, the IM application program at the first computer importing contents and format from a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the first computer;
- responsive to user entry in conjunction with at least one of the IM windows, the IM application program at the first computer transmitting the uploaded contents and format to the IM application program at the second computer;
- responsive to user entry in conjunction with the IM window of the first computer, the IM application program at the second computer, in lieu of displaying contents of the clipboard in the IM window of the second computer, displaying a user prompt indicating that clipboard contents and format from the first computer are available to the second computer, the user prompt including a hyperlink;

responsive to the second computer detecting user activation of the hyperlink, performing operations including importing the transmitted contents and format into a clipboard provided by an operating system running at the second computer.